This section should be read after this Anapanasati - Mindfulness of Breathing

# By Buddhadasa Bhikkhu Translated by Bhikkhu Nagasena

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**DHAMMANUPASSANA** 

**SATIPATTHANA** 

(From the Contemplation of Impermanence up to the

Contemplation of Tossing Back All Sankhāras)

Now we come to the practice of the Fourth Tetrad of *Ānāpānasati*, which discusses the last four stages of Mindfulness With Breathing, as follows:

- XIII. Continually **contemplating impermanence** while breathing in and out;
- XIV. Continually **contemplating fading away** while breathing in and out;
- XV. Continually **contemplating total quenching** while breathing in and out;
- XVI. Continually **contemplating letting go** while breathing in and out.

These four stages together form the tetrad of mental development which examines Dhamma (Truth, Reality) — that is, truths which manifest themselves as objects to train upon — rather than scrutinizing the body (the breath), feelings (*pīti* and *sukha*), and the mind according to its different features, as was done in the first, second, and third tetrads, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$  For a discussion of the first three tetrads see Mindfulness With Breathing: Unveiling the Secrets of Life (details in "Books & Tapes" section).

In this the fourth tetrad, the first point of interest is that the Buddha mentioned four dhammas. aniccam (impermanence), viraga (fading away), nirodha (quenching), and patinissagga (letting go), without saying anything about dukkham and anatta. Thoughtful people will raise their eyebrows at this and wonder whether or not unsatisfactoriness and not-self are of any importance. We should understand that they are of great importance, but in this instance, the Buddha included them both within aniccam because of the fact that, if we fully realize impermanence, we will naturally realize dukkham within it; and if we fully realize both impermanence and unsatisfactoriness, then we'll realize anattā – that there is nothing to attach to as "self" or as "ourself." For example, when we see water flowing, then we naturally see the fact that the water carries various things with it, or that this single-minded flowing of water doesn't listen to anyone. This example illustrates how these three facts are inseparably associated. In essence, when we fully see one characteristic, we must also see the remaining two included with it. For this reason the Buddha spoke only of *aniccain*, then passed on to *virāga* and *nirodha* without mentioning dukkham and anattā specifically. In another place, the Pali scriptures record that the Buddha said: "Medhiya, perception of not-self (anattā-saññā) appears to one who has perception of impermanence (anicca-sañña); one who perceives not-self removes ego conceit (asmimāna) and experiences *nibbāna* here and now (*dittha-dhamma*)." This shows that the Blessed One held that when there is perception of impermanence there is perception of not-self, ego-conceit is abandoned, and *nibbāna* is realized. To put it more succinctly, one who perceives impermanence realizes that very *nibbāna*.

It must be understood, however, that contemplation here is no partial perception of impermanence like in other, non-Buddhist sects, as mentioned in the Pali texts. Although some sects spoke of *aniccain* in detail, for example, that of the teacher Araka, their manner of realizing impermanence no matter how sophisticated is not what we're speaking of here. That is still a kind of *aniccain* which is external to the Buddha's teaching. Therefore, the realization of impermanence in the thirteenth stage of *ānāpānasati* has it's own specific meaning, different from that of other teachers in other places. Here we see more deeply to the degree of *dukkhain* and *anattā*. This meaning of *aniccain* appears in many other places in the scriptures, even though the general meaning refers to *aniccain* alone. We should follow the following standard:

whenever all three characteristics are mentioned, *aniccam* then has the narrow meaning, referring only to itself;

when only *aniccam* is mentioned, know that the Buddha included *dukkham* and *anattā* with it.

The Buddha gave us this standard for use in cases such as this thirteenth stage of *ānāpānasati*.

Ānāpānasati's fourth tetrad, in essence, is purely *vipassanā* (insight) and *paññā* (wisdom), unlike the previous stages which are either *samatha* (tranquility) or *samatha* mixed with *vipassanā*. Therefore, this tetrad of the practice of ānāpānasati, which begins with scrutinizing impermanence, is known as the Contemplation of *Dhamma* Foundation of Mindfulness (*dhammānupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna*) which we will now consider step by step.

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## **CHAPTER 17:**

## LESSON THIRTEEN OF *ăNăPăNASATI*

## (Continually Contemplating Impermanence)

The object or topic of the thirteenth lesson of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$ , the first lesson of the fourth tetrad, is:<sup>2</sup>

"That *bhikkhu*, trains himself: continually contemplating impermanence, I will breathe in;

Trains himself, continually contemplating impermanence, I will breathe out."  $^3$ 

The words "trains himself" here, should be taken to mean that when impermanence is seen there is no opportunity to concoct any immoral volition. Thus, one is unable to violate any moral precept and there is automatic *sīla-sikkhā*. While contemplating in the manner of this lesson, there is the kind of *samādhi* which is closely connected with *paññā* and equal to its strength, and so *citta-sikkhā* is included, also. Peering into or penetrating<sup>4</sup> the *aniccalakkhaṇa* (characteristic of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> "Lesson" translates a Thai word (khan) which usually means step, stage, or level. As many Western meditators tend to be impatient and see "steps" as things to hurriedly climb, we use the word "lesson" and emphasize that these are lessons to study for one's entire life.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The Thai word peng is used to translate the Pali word jháyati (the verb form of jhána) which is hard to render. It can mean to stare, to fix upon, to peer at or into, to focus upon, to hunt after. We use penetrate here because it relates to paññá and insight, and to getting deeply into natural facts.

impermanence) is already *paññā-sikkhā*. Thus, our *bhikkhu* is complete in the threefold training while practicing this step.

Regarding the words "continually contemplating impermanence," that is, *aniccānupassī*, the following questions must be considered:

- 1. What things are impermanent?
- 2. What is the nature of the condition of impermanence?
- 3. How do we contemplate impermanence?
- 4. Who is "the contemplator of impermanence" (the *aniccānupassī*)?

For a start, we may answer that all *sankhāras* (concocted things) are the impermanent things. Originating, existing, and ceasing are the conditions of impermanence. Using *sati* to scrutinize<sup>6</sup> the fact of impermanence is *aniccānupassanā* (contemplation of impermanence). The person who does this with every inhalation and exhalation is named "*aniccānupassī*" (one who continually contemplates impermanence).

Now, we'll consider the things that have the condition of impermanence.

#### I. WHAT THINGS ARE IMPERMANENT?

A succinct and comprehensive reply is that all *sankhāras* are the things which are impermanent. Such an answer, however, is not very useful for the practical examination of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Aniccánupassí is formed from anicca, impermanence; anu, along, after; and passa, one who sees; thus: "the one who sees and looks into impermanence," "the contemplator of impermanence."

 $<sup>^{6}</sup>$  Kamnod (Thai): to scrutinize, to focus attention on, to fix or set (a date), to observe, to note.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The first three questions will be examined in detail. The fourth need not.

impermanence. We require a clearer answer than that. Thus, while speaking within the boundaries of this step of developing  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$  and when asked what things are impermanent, the "experts" replied with the principle that the five *khandhas*, the six inner  $\bar{a}yatanas$ , and the twelve modes of  $paticca-samupp\bar{a}da$  are the things which are impermanent. Their intention was that we take up these *dhammas* for examination one by one and group by group.

**A. THE FIVE** *KHANDHAS*: This first group consists of *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *sankhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. This is a broad and general examination encompassing the many things of this world. We can speak even more concisely of *nāma* and *rūpa*, which, nonetheless, refer to all things in the world, both mental and material. All of these things are considered to be categories of sense objects, that is, the things watched, seen, heard, listened to, smelled, thought, etc. and including the objects of all actions. No matter how many dozens or hundreds of categories we arrange them in, they are always included in the terms "five *khandhas*" or "*nāma-rūpa*." These are the general objects of *vipassanā*.

**B. THE SIX INTERNAL SENSES:** This second group consists of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind-sense, together with the consciousness (viññāṇa) which arises at the six sense doors, and including the other things which arise in conjunction with the senses. All of these things are arranged within the categories of "Actors" and "The Subjects of Actions," namely, watcher, listener, smeller, taster, thinker, and the other contactors of the above mentioned sense objects. That side consists of the objects or receivers of the sense activity; this side consists of the subjects or doers. The experts advised us to examine both groups in order to completely and finally see the utter impermanence of both groups. Then, we won't attach to either. Thus for example, when the eyes see a form, observe that the form which is the object seen is impermanent, and that the eyes which are the subjects seeing are impermanent.

**C. THE TWELVE MODES<sup>9</sup> OF DEPENDENT ORIGINATION:** This last group focuses on every aspect or process of conditioning which interdependently arises in the moment, for example, of seeing a form. In that moment, no matter how many levels of concocting there are and how many factors are involved, each one must be examined to see impermanence. Every movement in the process must be

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 8}$  The ancient meditation masters and subsequent commentators, shorthand for accepted traditional knowledge.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Äkára, Tan Ajahn uses this term frequently and in a variety of ways, but we have had difficulty translating it properly. Literally, it means "the (way of) making," way of acting or being, mode, condition, factor. We alternately translate ákára as mode, condition, movement, and factor. (ET)

observed and fully seen: avijjā (ignorance) conditions sankhāra (mental concocting); sankhāra concocts viññana (consciousness), consciousness concocts namarūpa (mind-body), namarūpa concocts the salāyatanas (six senses), the senses concoct phassa (contact), contact concocts vedanā (feeling), feeling concocts tanhā (desire), desire concocts upādāna (attachment), attachment concocts bhava (existence), existence concocts jāti (birth), birth concocts ageing and death (jarāmarana), sorrow, lamentation, grief, pain, and so on, all of which are the arising side of dependent origination, the side which concocts dukkha. As for the modes of the quenching side of dependent origination, the same approach is used but in the opposite direction, that is, in the direction of inducing quenching: the quenching of ignorance quenches sankhāra, the quenching of sankhāra quenches viññāļa, the quenching of consciousness quenches nāmarūpa, and so on until the quenching of birth leads to the quenching of ageing, death, and the rest, so that the whole thing, including *dukkha*, finishes. The twelve modes in the arising side and the twelve modes in the quenching side must be brought under examination so that the impermanence of each mode is seen. In other words, when seeing the external ayatanas, such as forms; the inner ayatanas, such as the eyes; and the fact that the interaction between the two *āyatanas* leads to the arising of a variety of other conditions, realize that all of these things are impermanent. This leads to the complete, clear cut realization that everything is impermanent. Such a realization is more complete and final than can be examined in any other way.

To summarize in one more brief example, when the eyes see a form, there arise various experiences in sequence. We can distinguish three sides to our examination: (1) the object or external *āyatana*, the form, which is seen; (2) the subject or inner *āyatana*, the eyes and all of the nervous system concerned with vision; and (3) the different conditions which arise out of the relationship between the two, such as, the movement of the eyes being stimulated by form, the movement causing eye-consciousness to be born, the movement of contact between these three things ("eye-contact"), and the movement in which eye-contact causes *vedanā* (as *cakkhusamphassajāvedanā*) and the movement of *vedanā* concocting the arising of perception, volition, thought, pondering, and so forth on up to the making of actions (*kamma*) and receiving the results of actions in the myriad kinds of *dukkha*. All of these movements, conditions, stages, and aspects must be investigated and seen as nothing but impermanence, just as with the outer and inner *āyatanas*. In short, realize the impermanence of the external *āyatanas*, of the internal *āyatanas*, and of all the conditions related to them.

Only by realizing the impermanence of these things in this manner will we reach a genuine realization of *dukkhaṁ*, *anattā*, and *suññatā* which in turn leads to disenchantment (being fed up) and the fading away (dissolution) of desire. Any approach other than this is just a half-baked understanding of impermanence in which one gets stuck at that point, the same as with the seeing of impermanence in sects outside of Buddhism, as discussed above.

To summarize the point under consideration here once again, when asking "What is impermanent?" the answer is: things which are experienced, the things which perform the function of experiencing, and the various modes and conditions associated with that experience. These three categories together comprise all the things which are impermanent, which we like to call "all *sankhāras*." Analyzing these things into dozens or hundreds of categories is not important. The only important matter is to see the impermanence of the *sankhāras* truly, in the way explained here.

#### II. WHAT IS THE CHARACTERISTIC OF IMPERMANENCE?

The essence of this matter is found directly within the phenomena of arising, the phenomena of decay, and the phenomena of cessation, which in Pali is expressed, "All things are impermanent, naturally arising and passing away; once they arise, they cease." <sup>10</sup> This quotation exactly expresses the meaning of impermanence. Things do not exist in a single unchanging state forever, rather they are continuously changing. When there is change, there naturally must be arising and ceasing. If there is no cessation, change leading to new kinds of arising could not happen. Thus, the word "change" means arising then ceasing in order to arise anew in other forms endlessly. For this reason, the word "impermanence" has two meanings:

- 1. continual arising and ceasing,
- 2. No arising repeats itself due to the new causes and conditions which are continuously intervening.

In order to see the meaning of "impermanence," both meanings must be investigated until seen clearly and truly.

## III. THE LEVELS OF CONTEMPLATING IMPERMANENCE

(Maháparinibbána-Sutta, Digha-Nikáya)

What are the different levels of contemplating impermanence? Impermanence can be examined on successively deeper levels of contemplation. The first and easiest level, which anyone can see, is to observe the impermanence of groups of sankhāras. We take groups because they're easy to see. For example, in a collection of aggregates which we call a "human being," we easily see birth as a child, growth up to old age, and death. Or to break this into smaller parts, we can separate human life into three stages: youth, middleage, and old age. Then we specifically observe that even in one stage of life there is plenty of change. However, observing in this way is still coarse. We must know how to examine in such detail that we don't see those things as changing only everyday, or every hour, or every minute, or even every second, but that they change every mind-moment. A mind-moment is a period of time which can't be measured by the usual standards explainable in everyday language. In Dhamma Language, in the ultimate sense, however, mindmoment denotes a period of time which is extremely short, so short that we can't be aware of the divisions between them. We probably can't explain this in a way that can be directly understood. We must use comparisons which can't really be made, such as, faster than a lightning flash. This is as deep and detailed as we can go, such that the eye can't see the changes happening in material and mental things with every mind moment. Every material atom is in tumultuous change, too fine for the eye to see; and the mental elements are even more finely and rapidly changing than the material. All of these are ways to look at change from the viewpoint of time. We use time to grab things so that change can be seen from this perspective, which is related to measurement. This leads us to say there is change in even the smallest thing, that which can't be divided any further, and in the shortest period of time which we can conceive.

Another method for contemplating impermanence, one more refined than the first, is to contemplate that each and every thing in the world, whether material or mental, whether outside the body or inside it, arises before a single mind, namely, that mind which is acting in contact with or in awareness of that thing. Whatever the sense door (eye, ear, etc.), we only experience that the thing is in the world because mind is aware of it. Without mind, it would be as if that thing didn't exist. Thus we can say that because there is mind, there is that thing; because mind arises (that is, in awareness of those things), that thing arises (appears to awareness). When mind ceases, that thing ceases also, and has no more value for the person involved than non-existent things. For this particular reason, we say that all things always depend on mind, are within the power of mind, have significance only in regard to mind, and arise and cease following mind. Therefore, as mind is a thing which arises and ceases from moment to moment, all of those things only have meaning as things which arise and cease with each mind-moment. We should not forget that this is true whether they are material or mental, outside the body or within it. This approach is a more subtle realization of the characteristic of impermanence.

Another means by which we can successively see impermanence more deeply is to see that each thing is compounded by levels of causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*). Impermanence, or change, from this perspective isn't directly there in that thing, but is in the causes and conditions which concoct it. In turn, those causes and conditions are absolutely impermanent, for they too are conditioned by another level of

impermanent causes and conditions. Let's look at this example: Why do the skin and flesh of human beings change? They change because they arise from food which is itself impermanent and changing, for food originates from elements and weather conditions which are also constantly changing. Weather, too, has it's origins in other causes and conditions which are endlessly changing. (There is no end to backtracking through successive levels of causes and factors.) When material phenomena are like this, mental phenomena are even more so, because the are lighter and quicker than the material phenomena. In summation, each thing changes because it is established upon other things, which are also changing in endless causal succession. Seeing *aniccam* in this manner expands to include the realization of *dukkham* and *anattā* within it.

A further method is to contemplate impermanence with the meaning that each *sankhāra* is conditioned by many other things. Each of these things can be further divided into smaller parts *ad infinitum* until they are nothing. Only because there is, in each moment, a coincidence or relationship appropriate to the conditions, does any given *sankhāra* appear to be a "self," or an individual entity, or something desirable and satisfying. Whenever the relationship of things transforms in some other way, the lucky coincidence breaks up and dissolves. Please notice that the movement whereby many things come together in a relationship cannot result in any permanent entity. Rather, these compounds break up and change more easily than ever. When many people work together, the cases in which differences of opinion occur is proportional to the amount of people involved. The impermanence of the relationship increases as sure as a shadow follows a body. The aim here is to point out that the impermanence of relationship is different than the previous point made. Here, impermanence is seen within the very thing which is observed. We've now brought up enough examples to point out varying forms of the characteristic of impermanence. Next, we must consider the ways of contemplating impermanence.

## IV. THE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The general way to examine impermanence is to see the arising, existing, and ceasing of all things. However, our objective here is not to send the mind off to examine everything, ponder them and related matters with our reasoning, and then conclude or deduce that they are "impermanent." That is something for philosophers and logicians to do, not for cultivators of the mind. That approach results merely in the different theories and standards which have been laid down by thinkers over the years, but doesn't result in the clear, penetrating realization which leads to disenchantment (*nibbidā*) and fading away (*virāga*).

The way of contemplation which fits with mental cultivation must turn inward. It focuses upon the things which are existing within, which one actually has caused to appear or to arise within oneself. Then,

observe the transformation that manifests within those things and simultaneously manifests in one's experience of those things in the mind.

All of this must happen in the present. First, they are directly present to us; then they become past. Or compare them against the about-to-happen future by observing that the present we are scrutinizing was something future just a moment ago. When we practice in this way, we will penetrate into and soak up the fact of impermanence genuinely and totally.

When, for example, we contemplate one of the five *khandhas*, we first must cause the actual thing to appear. When observing *rūpa-khandha* (form aggregate), we take one specific component of the body which is vital for the body's existence. This is why the Buddha advised taking the breathing as the body, or *rūpa-khandha*, in the early stages of *ānāpānasati*, so that we can gain clear, penetrating understanding of the fact that the body is impermanent and so on, until there is genuine disenchantment and dispassion. This is altogether different from contemplating with the mouth - such as, repeating "body, body" endlessly - or dividing the body into more details and facts than we can keep track of. Neither of these intellectual "examinings" is capable of reaching the real body and its impermanence.

The breath is wind-element, that is, one element of the four elements which make up the body. More significantly, it is the most important *paccaya* (condition, influence, support) of all the bodies - those consisting of earth-element, water-element, and fire-element<sup>11</sup> - which make up the body. If the breath is just slightly abnormal, the other parts will be affected, possibly even damaged. Therefore, taking the breath as the part of the body to contemplate is the most intelligent and appropriate thing to do, because using this essence or reality of the body is the most important, as well as the most convenient. Focusing on every inhalation and exhalation is equal to directly focusing on the body's reality in the most intimate way possible. One might even be able to contemplate its impermanence and other characteristics to the fullest extent, as was explained in the earlier lessons of *ānāpānasati*.

All of this forms a skillful means ( $up\bar{a}ya$ ) which enables us to penetrate to the thing we are observing, to observe it genuinely, and finally to see it in its utmost reality. Anyone can see that this is not the same as memorization, recitation, and logical calculation, none of which can be compared with genuine contemplation, for they are too far away from the reality that we call " $k\bar{a}ya$ " (body).

 $<sup>^{11}</sup>$  Representing, respectively, the physical properties of dimension ("eating space"), cohesion, and temperature. Wind-element represents movement.

Even when examining one of the mental *khandhas*, such as *vedanā*, the principal is identical. First, we must cause feeling to actually appear to the mind, in particular, by developing *samādhi* so that the feelings of *pīti* and *sukha* arise. Then, search out and observe the characteristic of impermanence and the causes of impermanence, as discussed in the above section about the conditions of impermanence<sup>12</sup>. All of this points to the importance of the fact that contemplating something requires that we first must make that thing appear in order to look into it with the concentrated mind. Then the characteristics and facts associated with that thing will be seen with certainty. Merely thinking of something's name, remembering and pondering all the details and facts we've been taught about it, then piling on our own reasoning and conjectures that "it must be like this and like that" is the method of scholars and academics. No matter how much we examine something in this intellectual way, it will not lead to a thoroughly convincing experience of truth, unlike the method we are discussing here.

#### THREE WAYS OF PRACTICE

#### FOR GETTING TO THE ESSENCE OF THOSE THINGS

We have already categorized the objects of contemplation into three groups, each of which has many, many sub-groups; nonetheless, there is a way of practice which will get to the heart of all of the things in those groups. We can apply this method to each of the three categories.

**A. Five** *Khandhas*: We get to the heart of the *rūpa-khandha* (form aggregate) by scrutinizing the breath as explained earlier. We can reach the essence of *vedanā-khandha* (feeling aggregate) by concentrated examintion of the *pīti* (rapture) and *sukha* (bliss) that arise when there is *samādhi*. We can also use any other feelings which truly arise in oneself, that actually manifest to the mind. In a coarse way, we get to the essence of *saññā* by examining the recognitions and evaluations which are occurring within ourselves and see how these are changing. The more refined way is to fix on the things which arise out of *vedanā*: the perceptions, recognitions, and evaluations of the feelings. We consider the manner of their existence, that is, how they arise, change, and pass away.

<sup>12</sup> Section II.

 $<sup>^{13}</sup>$  Chapters IV through XII, which cover the first four lessons of ánápánasati. (Not translated here.)

To reach the essence of *sankhāra-khandha*, use the same method as with *saññā*. In a general way, we fix on the mind which is involved in thinking (*vitakka*: it doesn't matter what the thinking is about), then we examine why it is that the mind thinks and how thoughts arise, change, function, and cease. The more refined way is to cause *vedanā* to arise, such as the *pīti* or *sukha* of *jhāna*, then vigilantly guard and observe the perceptions and thinking which arise toward those feelings. Experience their impermanence in the way described under lessons seven and eight of *ānāpānasati*. The thinking (*vitakka*) just mentioned is what we mean by *sankhāra-khandha*.

With *viññāṇa-khandha*, in general, we examine the clear and immediate seeing or knowing of any object which contacts the inner sense bases. Regarding this clear seeing or knowing: due to what causes and by what conditions does it arise? How does it appear? and how does it cease? But all of this is very difficult to do, because it happens too quickly. It is better, more subtle, and more convenient to examine that mind itself. Scrutinize the mind as it performs its complex duties: now - functioning as consciousness of the object; now - functioning as consciousness of *vedanā*; now - functioning as thinking in various ways; now - the further conditioning which leads to lust or freedom from lust, hatred or freedom from hatred, delusion or freedom from delusion, to give a few examples. In this way, we scrutinize the mental behavior, the mind's activity of all kinds, in all periods, and in all its different forms. This is the most certain and complete contemplation of the consciousness aggregate. All of the possible sense objects (the six external *āyatanas*) are covered by the term "five aggregates." They must be examined in the exact moment in which they function as objects of sense contact (*phassa*).

- **B.** Internal Sense Bases: The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind make up the group of things (inner  $\bar{a}yatanas$ ) which experience the sense objects (outer  $\bar{a}yatanas$ ). Here, the principle remains the same as above: contemplate during the actual moment of experiencing the object, at whichever sense door it appears. For example, let's take the eyes seeing a form, the eyes genuinely experiencing a form. Before this, in a moment when the eyes have not yet seen any form, it is as if the eyes didn't exist. In such a moment, the eyes have no meaning whatsoever. But when a form makes contact, it is as if the eyes instantly arise. This is called the "birth" of the eyes, which continue to exist as long as the form is seen. When the seeing ends, the eyes cease. Then, it is as if the eyes don't exist, until a new form comes along to make a new contact. In this way, we can clearly examine and perceive the arising, continuing, and ceasing of the eyes. It is the same with the ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Thus, we can say that we must see them in the moment of functioning, and only then, in order to genuinely see them and their impermanence.
- **C.** The Modes of Dependent Origination: Regarding the various modes which interact and concoct among material and mental phenomena, which we call "paṭicca-samuppāda" (dependent origination), the standard is the same as above. In order to scrutinize each of these modes and their impermanence, we must

examine them in the exact moment of their activity, and only then. Once again using the example of the eyes contacting a form, we must see the following: In that moment of contact between the eyes and a form, how is our *avijjā* (ignorance) present? How does this ignorance push on to condition *sankhāra* (concocting, mental activity)? How is the force that causes mental activity conditioned? How then is *viññāṇa* (consciousness) made to appear? How then is the appearance of *nāmarūpa* (mind-body) conditioned? How are the *āyatanas* (senses) conditioned so as to perform their functions? In what way is *phassa* (contact) conditioned so that its function is complete? Then, how is *vedanā* (feeling) conditioned? By what means is the wanting and desiring (*taṇhā*) related to that feeling conditioned into arising? How does attachment to that thing come to be completely formed? How does this lead to the becoming or existence of some "story" and then to *jāti* (birth)? Finally, how does the degeneration known as ageing and death, along with the various other forms of *dukkha*, such as sorrow and grief, come about? These are the modes of one complete cycle in the dependent origination of *dukkha*.

We must examine all of these factors exactly when each is conditioning the next factor, when each is involved in the process, in order to see each one in its reality. See the reality of ignorance in the moment that it functions through the power of its stupidity and not-knowing to concoct the mental activity. See the reality of concocting in the moment that it acts to condition consciousness through the power of sankhāras inability to keep still once it has arisen and its need to continually concoct. We will see actual consciousness, when it conditions, through the natural power of the consciousness-element (*viññāna-dhātu*), the arising of the sort of mind-body which completely fulfills the meaning of the word "mind-body." By itself, the consciousness-element has no effect, but when it comes into relation with the thing called "mind-body," then it expresses its marvelous influences through that mind-body. The mind-body is the same. Without its reliance on consciousness-element, it could not arise as mind-body, because there would be no consciousness of either the material or mental elements. And we know actual mind-body only when it functions as the sense bases or as consciousness through the sense bases, that is, when the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind are foundations for the arising of sense consciousness. Even with contact, feeling, desire, attachment, becoming, birth, and each kind of *dukkha* (such as ageing and death), the meanings and explanations are the same. We know the reality of each thing when that thing is actually performing its function of causing an effect, namely, some new thing. Here we say it concocts the other thing. This is how we can see, with certainty, the reality and impermanence of each thing.

We must not forget that all of this must be observed in the mind, only in our actual awareness. The practice of the third tetrad of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati^{14}$  will help a great deal here. It helps us to see more easily the twists, trickery, and conditioning of the mind, because more than a few of the modes of dependent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Contemplation of the mind: experiencing its many "states," delighting it, concentrating it, and liberating it.

origination are included there. When we have practiced as is described here, then we will clearly see that ignorance itself is impermanent, the act of concocting mental activity is impermanent, the mental activity which is concocted is impermanent, and so on, mode by mode for the entire cycle of dependent origination. It should be mentioned that this examination of impermanence is finer, more subtle, and more detailed than the examination described in Section A, where we focused exclusively on the external sense objects, and in Section B, where we focused exclusively on the internal sense bases.

**SUMMARY:** In the contemplation of impermanence, we must concentrate upon and examine actual, existing things. First, we cause each thing to manifest clearly. Then we observe how it arises and from what it arises; how it is established and what its function is in that moment; and finally, how and due to what causes it ceases. Contemplating impermanence from the perspective of dependent origination is more detailed and refined than all other methods.

## CONTEMPLATING DUKKHAM

We've been discussing methods of contemplating impermanence alone, however, true experience of impermanence finds *dukkhaṁ* and *anattā* within that impermanence. How does this happen? Seeing the deeper aspects of impermanence, so that we also see *dukkhaṁ*, can be categorized according to various meanings of the word *dukkhaṁ*. We will look at three of these meanings.

**A.** *Dukkhaṁ* as "Enduring Suffering": In the word *dukkhaṁ*, many meanings can be inferred. It is composed of two components: *du* and *kha* (or *khaṁ*). If we take *du* to mean "difficult: and *khama* to mean "endure," then *dukkhaṁ* means "difficult to endure." We will see this clearly when we observe that impermanence means *jāti*, *jāra*, and *maraṇa* (birth, old age, and death). If there was permanence and no change, then how could there be birth, decrepitude, and death? The *dukkha* that arises through birth, old age, and death arises directly out of impermanence and change. Further forms of *dukkha*, such as sorrow, lamentation, grief, and despair are all due to the fact that things don't happen as we wish. We don't get the things that we desire, we experience things that we do not want, and we are always separated from the things we do want. The cause of this comes from the fact that all animals and all conditioned things are constantly changing according to their causes and conditions.

Even the miscellaneous, everyday *dukkha* of householders, such as cold, heat, hunger, thirst; and the need to eat, bathe, and excrete; exists only because the body is a compound of many impermanent and conditioned things (*sankhāras*). We change with every mind movement. We need this, we need that, we

need to change in this way and in that way - all the time. This causes all sorts of concerns about the care of the body, which again shows clearly that these difficulties which we must bear are due to the change of the body.

When we observe that *dukkha* is disease, whether of children or adults, of healthy or vulnerable people, we realize that these too are because of the changes in the *sankhāras* that form and surround the body. If there was nothing changing, illness probably wouldn't occur.

There is the *dukkha* of having to eat food, wear clothing, and use shelter. We must try to earn a living in order to acquire them. We must suffer through exhausting hardships. Or we struggle and compete with others in many ways until we end up quarrelling and becoming enemies. Even these forms of *dukkha* are caused by the endless impermanence and change of the body, of the mind, of the mental defilements, of desire, and of learning, all of which are *sankhāras* just the same. So we must say that even these forms of *dukkha* are caused by the change of conditioned things. When we observe change with clarity, we clearly see, as a matter of course, that *dukkha* must arise within that change.

Now, if we look at mental phenomena in more detail, that is, examine the dukkha that comes from the burning of the mental defilements (lust, hatred, delusion, etc.), which cause beings to anxiously struggle in search of peace and happiness, we will probably find that they are directly caused by impermanence, also. This first type, which can be seen easily in livestock, is bodily changes. When the body grows to a certain point, or reaches a certain place in its cycle, various sexual problems occur. These cannot be avoided. They are caused by natural, bodily changes. On a higher level, there are changes which are outside of nature. Eating and living improve. Learning and thinking broaden and expand. The problems about sexual matters and mental impurities change accordingly. As they become more intricate and complex, the dukkha caused by them also grows more complicated. This is mental change. When the bodily and mental changes come together, it is a natural foundation for dukkha, because we're extensively and profoundly burned from two sides. But we look in the opposite direction and overlook the truth that this *dukkha* is the result of change and the delusions of the defilements, which are also derived from bodily and mental change. If anyone sets his mind to scrutinizing these physical and mental changes within himself, he will clearly see the sort of dukkha that we are talking about. One will see it as solely a result of change, or as a thing changing within itself, and will no longer be deluded by the deceptions of change. Then one will solve problems in an undefiled way. Otherwise, the problems will grow heavier and unsolvable, and will become more and more destructive for oneself.

If we go still deeper and examine the *dukkha* that arises from having to receive the effects of our actions, or that happen due to the diverse actions of all beings, we will still see that it is a matter of change. Actions are impermanent, are things which change. Therefore, the results of actions are impermanent; they change just the same as the actions. The doers of the actions are impermanent things. Receiving the effects of the actions is impermanent. Everything is always changing, consequently we humans receive the fruits of actions according to the circumstances of change. When receiving the fruit of evil actions, we suffer openly. When receiving the fruit of good actions, we suffer most secretly, so that we're not even aware that it is torment. But both of these, whether hell or heaven, equally mean that we must endure whirling around within the flow of *samsāra* (cycling around through death and birth). All of this can be called impermanence or the results of impermanence, but their value is the same - the *dukkha* of change. The more we contemplate, the more we'll see that the more there is change, the more there is *dukkha*, because that change is not peaceful. Happiness is a kind of change; consequently, it can't really be happiness. It can only be the kind of *dukkha* that deludes and deceives us enough for us to misunderstand it.

When we contemplate *dukkha* to its furthest degree, on the level which is its essence, which the Buddha expressed: "In summary, the five *khandhas* compounded with attachment are *dukkha*," we see most fully, once again, that it directly originates from impermanence. Attachment to the five *khandhas* is *dukkha*, because the *khandhas* are impermanent. The very impermanence of the *khandhas* is what causes any one who attaches to them to experience *dukkha* directly. Another thing which should not be forgotten is that attachment is also impermanent, or, if we speak conventionally, the individual who attaches is impermanent. When the object of attachment and all things involved with it are solely impermanent things, the condition of *dukkha* is something that cannot be avoided. All of this shows that impermanent things naturally produce the condition of suffering from out of themselves and within themselves all the time. This causes suffering within these things and for any person who attaches to them, the two being unavoidable and inseparable. This is the first meaning of *dukkhaṁ*.

**B.** *Dukkhaṁ* as "Disgusting to See": If we take *du* to mean "ugly" or "evil" and *kha* (from *ikkha*) to mean "look," then this aspect has the meaning "once seen, it is ugly." When one really sees it, it's abhorrent and repulsive. The meaning of this aspect of *dukkhaṁ* is that the more we observe it, the uglier it gets; the deeper we see, the more repulsive it becomes. No matter what group of *sankhāras* is observed, it will grow more disgusting as we see more deeply into its impermanence, into the illusion of those *sankhāras*. This feeling of hate or repulsion is one more side of *dukkhaṁ*.

When we say that all compounded things (*sankhāras*) are *dukkhaṁ*, it means that all *sankhāras*, when truly seen for what they are, are repulsive. In what way are they repulsive? They are repulsive in their impermanence, in their violent change with every mind moment, and in their condition which deludes us

into mistaking them for permanent substances. Simultaneously, the condition of suffering is thrown and poured in without pause or let up for the owner of any particular *sankhāra*, as explained above. Thus, we should see to what degree all *sankhāras* are repulsive, when we examine them with mindfulness and wisdom, not with the closed eyes and ears of our defilements and desires.

In summary, we can say that the condition of impermanence (*aniccam*) is the condition of "once seen, it's ugly." The more we look and the more we see, the more disgusting and repulsive it is. Therefore, we can say that the conditions of impermanence and "once seen, it's ugly" are gathered together in the same things, that is, in all *sankhāras*. When speaking about impermanence, repulsiveness is also meant. When speaking of repulsiveness, impermanence is implied. Here, then, is a second implication of the word "*dukkham*."

**C.** *Dukkhaṁ* as "Uglily Void, Wickedly Empty": By separating the components of *dukkhaṁ* and taking *du* to mean "ugly" and *khaṁ* to mean "void, empty," we arrive at the meaning "uglily void." The condition we call "wickedly empty" refers to the fact that all *sankhāras* have nothing but impermanence, namely, swiftly flowing, endless spirals of change. We can go so far as to say that in these *sankhāras* there is only impermanence and change, that is, the flow of change is itself these things. Besides this, we can't find any abiding substance within them. Consequently, all *sankhāras* have only this condition of being "uglily empty." However, such a meaning of *dukkhaṁ* as this broadens to include *anattā*. Therefore, we will consider it in detail in connection with the fact that when impermanence is seen, then *anattā* must be seen. (To be discussed subsequently.) Here, we simply intend to point out that even this third meaning of *dukkhaṁ* is included in the word "impermanence," because impermanence is thoroughly void. There is only this change which stops for nothing.

Thus, within impermanence there are three conditions: the state of suffering, the state of "once seen, it is ugly," and the state of "uglily void." These are gathered together fully in the same place and at the same moment. In order to realize impermanence genuinely, one must clearly and unavoidably see these three conditions within it. Therefore, we ought to say that when we see impermanence, we without a doubt see *dukkhaṁ*, also. This explains why the Buddha spoke only of impermanence, and not *dukkhaṁ*, in this fourth tetrad of *ānāpānasati*. The reason is that *dukkhaṁ* is included within impermanence in such a way that the two cannot be separated.

## CONTEMPLATING ANATTă

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> This voidness or emptiness is synonomous with suññatá.

Now we'll consider how it is that we find *anattā* included within *aniccaṁ*. The characteristic of impermanence naturally indicates for the most part the characteristic of not-self, that is, the characteristic of illusive and the fact that impermanent things have no abiding substance. Characteristics such as these fully demonstrate the voidness of self that we call "*sunnata*." This is the essence of the fact that impermanence demonstrates not-self within itself. Thus, it isn't necessary to say that because of impermanence there is *anattā*. The truth is already apparent that impermanent things have no real substance, that their real nature is merely the flow of change. This is the first point. Now we can further examine according to various implications of the word "*anattā*." We will consider four of them.

- A. Anattā Because There is Nothing Independent of Causes and Conditions: There is no independent self. Impermanent things are dependent on the factors which have conditioned them. Or from another angle, each thing is only the causal factor for the further conditioning of that other thing which is next in the line of successions. This demonstrates that all things fall under the power of this natural law; they change endlessly, alternately being causes and conditions for each other. According to this view, anattā is a further aspect of impermanence. It is the continual change according to the Law of Change of all causes and conditions. Each of these must always have the conditions of arising, existing, and ceasing within themselves. Whenever they halt or change, that is the end of their being "selves" or lasting substances. In summary, there is anattā, because there is only the impermanence of the things which are causes and conditions.
- **B.** Anattā Because Uncontrollable: This point aims at change, once again, which no one can control. Furthermore, its meaning encompasses the various aspects of dukkham which arise out of the uncontrollability of change. Ordinarily, we humans want to be free of dukkha, but we are not in control and dukkha naturally arises out of impermanence. This uncontrollability of things is based in impermanence. Thus, impermanence is the complete and sole cause of anattā. When there is awareness of the fact of noncontrol, the awareness of dukkham and impermanence comes up immediately. It's the same as when we're burnt and feel pain; we feel the fire's heat simultaneously. There is no way to separate them.
- **C.** Anattā Because Ownerless: Things are ownerless because theirs is the condition of being things whose owners cannot be found and because nobody is able to own them. Again, this is due to the power of impermanence which answers to no one and simply changes unremittingly. Its reality is such that nobody can make himself its owner. Even one who has so much power that we suppose him to be God is unable to own impermanence. Rather, this thing holds God within its power, which is to say that God is impermanent. Aniccam has the "right" and the power to be like this, to refuse all would-be owners. It is the same as

anattā, only different in name and spelling. As for reality, aniccam and anattā refer to the same thing refusal to have an owner.

- **D.** The General Meaning of *Anatti*. This meaning refers to the fact of having the characteristic of being in conflict with or opposing *attā* (self, soul), which is the meaning which summarizes all the other meanings as well as the way to verify them. By "all of these meanings," we mean all the features of *aniccain* and *dukkhain* which have been explained in this chapter. In this respect there are the definitions:
  - 1. if something is *attā*, then it is permanent and pleasant;
  - 2. if something is both impermanent and *dukkhain*, then it is *anattā*.

When the facts are such, it is clearly assured within themselves that *anattatā* (selflessness) is impermanence and *dukkhaṁ*, or that being *anattā* is equivalent to being impermanent and painful. Therefore, all *sankhāras*, which are without exception made up of impermanence and *dukkhaṁ*, are fully *anattā*. Observing and realizing the selflessness of all compounded things is the same as realizing the impermanence and *dukkha²* of them all. Or, to put it the other way, when seeing the impermanence of all *sankhāras*, we must also see their *dukkhaṁ* and *anattā*. We cannot avoid doing so. Thus, the short two-word phrase "seeing impermanence" naturally points further to seeing the impermanence of all *sankhāras* and seeing them in their character of being unavoidably painful and not-self as well.

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Although the Lord Buddha spoke only the words "aniccānupassī" (the contemplation of impermanence), the heart of the matter in itself points to larger implications. First, see the impermanence of all conditioned things, because there is no impermanence for us to see in that which is unconditioned. Second, see impermanence according to dukkhaṁ and anattā, for they are the constant, eternal conditions of all impermanent things. For these reasons, the Lord Buddha only spoke of impermanence without needing to mention dukkhaṁ and anattā by name in this fourth tetrad of ānāpānasati. Therefore, we should understand that this thirteenth lesson aims at the tilakkhaṇa (three inherent characteristics) or sāmaññalakkhaṇa (universal characteristics) fully, in accordance with the facts explained above.

The practitioner of anapanasati has a practical way for seeing the impermanence of all sankhāras. Impermanence appears from the very beginning of the practice and through each succeeding step. The breaths are sankhāras. The mind and mindfulness (sati) which attend to the breathing are sankhāras. The various objects and images which appear from stage to stage are sankhāras. The vedanā, such as pīti and sukha which arise out of concentration on the breathing, are sankhāras. The nivaraṇas (hindrances) are sankhāras. The factors of *jhāna* and every level of *jhāna* are sankhāras. The various dhammas which are gathered or integrated (samodhāna) in that moment are sankhāras. <sup>16</sup> Even the scrutiny itself is a sankhāra. The fact that the scrutiny changes is a sankhāra, too. All the dhammas which are being investigated as the objects of each stage and level of the meditation are purely sankhāras. For these reasons, we have the opportunity to note impermanence (which include *dukkha*-ness and *anattatā* fully within it) in every step of ānāpānasati. And in each step there are many ways in which we can investigate it, depending on how we will choose to do so. However, we can summarize the ways to contemplate in the following categories: contemplate some groups of sankhāras as the objects of experience (external āyatanas); contemplate some groups of sankhāras as the experiencers (internal āyatanas) of the objects; and contemplate some groups of sankhāras as the conditions for a continual concocting, one after the other, of new things - for example, concentrating on a *nimitta* (imaginary image) brings up the factors of *jhāna* - that is, as dependent origination. Altogether, there are these three categories. In this way, our contemplation of sankhāras is comprehensive and complete. Further, in seeing impermanence, painfulness and not-self are seen fully, as explained above. Practicing in this way makes it unnecessary to wander aimlessly outside the framework of ānāpānasati meditation which is a comprehensive contemplation of all sankhāras, since it contemplates the realities of these natural things rather than just contemplating the names of things as is done in the schools. No matter how much people contemplate in that way, it will never be enough. The results will be no better than contemplating nothing at all.

When the practitioner contemplates the impermanence of any one of the conditioned things which appear during the development of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$ , there will naturally be penetration into the facts of aniccani, dukkhani, and  $anatt\bar{a}$  which is profound enough to lead to genuine  $nibbid\bar{a}$  (disenchantment) and  $vir\bar{a}ga$  (fading away) for the practice of the following lesson. When there is this realization, in the way he have explained, which is a seeing of aniccani more profound and clear than in previous steps of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$ , one will likewise be able to induce the twenty-nine dhammas to a higher and more refined degree than in the previous steps, which puts the meditation of this step on a higher level. This lesson is classified as dhammanupassana-satipatthana-bhavana (the foundation of mindfulness which is contemplation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The integration of dhammas, generally given as twenty-nine, is explained in detail in the chapter concerning lesson five ("experiencing píti"). "In the moment when the meditator is breathing in and out with clear comprehension of the vedaná as being impermanent, painful, and not-self, the mind attains to twenty-nine different dhammas (virtues, qualities). In other words, all these things can be found in the mind in that moment.

Dhamma), because Dhamma has been contemplated rather than the breath, feelings, or mind, as in the first three tetrads.

This ends our examination of the thirteenth lesson of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$ . Next, we will examine the fourteenth lesson. <sup>17</sup>

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 17}$  The translation of the following chapter will appear in the next Evolution/Liberation.

## LESSON 14

# Chapter 18 (Constantly contemplating fading away)18

The fourteenth step of *ānāpānasati* or the second of this fourth tetrad has as its topic, "The bhikkhu naturally trains himself: continually contemplating fading away, I will breathe in. He trains himself, continually contemplating fading away, I will breathe out." The things that we must consider here are: (1) What is fading away? (2) How does this fading away occur? (3) In what does it arise? and (4) How does one act that one is described as one who contemplates this fading away?

The Pali for fading away is *virāga* which literally means to be without *rāga*, that is to be free of stains, namely lust or the passions. Its meaning or connotations, in fact, refer to the fading away of attachment and clinging, and of all the other mistaken assumptions that lead us either to fall in love and be infatuated or to fall into hatred. So it is that *virāga* here, does not have the exact same meaning as the *ariyamagga*, as in some places.<sup>20</sup> But it refers broadly to making the defilements disappear or dissipate and fade away in the same way that the noble path destroys the defilements. It means specifically the condition of dissolving and fading away, more than it refers to the dhammas which are the means or tools for bringing that fading away about.

From the perspective of practice however, we see both of these together: when seeing fading away clearly and directly, then one naturally sees the dhammas which are the means for bringing about that fading away. It's like when we see a rope that has been tied up in a knot, and then that knot is untied. We also most plainly see the thing that unties the knot. Thus one ought to hold

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>This lecture is the 45th in this series, from 11 November, 1959.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> The Pali for this phrase is "*Virāgānupassi assasissīmiti sikkhati, virāgānupassi passasissīmiti sikkhati.*"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>In some places in the Pali, *virāga* is more or less a synonym for the noble eight-fold path (*ariyamagga*), but that isn't the case here.

that *virāga* in the context of *ānāpānasati* here refers directly to the fading away, and indirectly to the dhammas that cause that fading away in so far that they are appended to that fading away.

The word "fading away" has the opposite meaning of the word "stained." Ordinarily, beings have minds that are stained with everything, with the attractiveness of being this or that kind of self, and with the power of clinging or attaching, or mistaken assumptions that have ignorance as their source. Whenever this stainedness is dissolved and faded, then there is the meaning of "fading away" right there, through the activity of the fading away of the feeling of desire, of passion, of the feelings of being this or that, of being this or that kind of self.

As for the question, "How does fading away occur?" we can answer briefly that fading away arises because of seeing *aniccam* (impermanence) through the method that was discussed in the chapter on the thirteenth step of ānāpānasati. Seeing Dhamma in such a way is like undoing, untying, or cleansing, so that it fades and fades away, because it demonstrates that we clearly see the truth that all things ought not to be grasped at, ought not to be attached and clung to, because they are exclusively *aniccam* (impermanence), *dukkham* (unsatisfactory), and *anattā* (not-self) all the time, and they cause dukkha to arise for the person who clings and grasps at them. It's only from not seeing the truth of this matter that one would go clinging and grasping at things that would cause suffering for oneself. It's like a person who doesn't know about disease, doesn't know the causes of disease, and then is satisfied to mingle and get involved with such things for the sake of pleasure and fun through the power of mistaken assumptions. Whenever such a person sees the danger and harm of such things, there is fading away and an escape due to weariness towards those things arises. Thus, we can say that fading away occurs because one sees the truth of the things that one has clung to.

As for the question "In what does fading away arise?" we can answer broadly that it arises in everything which is impermanent. As we mentioned in the previous chapter, these refer to the five *khandas*, the inner *āyatana* and the various modes of *paṭicca-samuppāda*. Whenever the practioner contemplates and sees the impermanence of something, she naturally sees the fact that the mind begins to fade away from that thing, in that thing.

As for the question "How does one practice in order to be called one who continually contemplates fading away?" we can explain that when seeing impermanence in any one thing until there arises fading away from attachment with every inhalation and exhalation, that activity is called *virāgānupassanā*, the contemplation of fading away. The person who practices in this

way is called *virāgānupassi*, one who continually contemplates fading away. We will examine certain aspects of practice concerning this further.

The practioner who wishes to cause fading away to arise in any particular thing must first contemplate until seeing the ādīnava, that is the wicked, nasty harm in that thing. Once seeing the harm or danger of that thing, one will be contented with separating from and divorcing that thing. Thus fading away will occur. Otherwise, no matter what one does, there is no way that one would be satisfied with divorcing that thing. The ancient teachers compared this with a person who mistakes a snake for a fish, who is very delighted and satisfied with that snake, like "taking a spinning discus to be a lotus." He receives various dangers, even to the point of death, because of that over and over again until he finally sees the truth that it's just a snake, it's not a fish. In this way, the words "seeing the wicked harm" here refer to contemplating clearly and directly the impermanence and unsatisfactoriness and selflessness as we explained in detail in the preceding chapter. Consequently one will welcome or be willing to divorce that thing. There will be a certainty to the degree that is called totally surrendering one's faith, which in Pali is "saddhā ti muddha." This refers to the certainty of heart through the power of wisdom and it occurs when the mind is samādhi, that is, there is the power of samādhi included fully. The power of samādhi causes one to see clearly to the end and the power of seeing clearly to the end causes one to totally surrender one's faith in not clinging and grasping at that thing ever again. All of these refer to the moment of fading away. All of this occurs during each inhalation and exhalation. As we said earlier, the things called "all sankhāras" or sabbe sankhārā which are the objects of our contemplation in order to see impermanence and so on. When analyzed according to our academic principles, we distinguish the group of objects as being the five khandhas that is one group. The group that experiences the objects are the inner ayatana making a second group. And the conditions of the various things that are concocted and arising successively, namely the various modes of *paticca-samuppāda* are a third group. Thus one who wishes to practice this step of anapanasati broadly and deeply ought to note at least these three groups. That is, at a minimum, contemplate the five khandhas, the six ayatana, and the 12 modes of paticca-samuppāda, one by one in using an approach to arise within oneself, or so that we see clearly those which already exist within us, and are demonstrating their characteristics within oneself until we see that clearly. Then we take these up to examine as to their impermanence and so forth until we recognize and realize the wicked harm of all these sankhāras, from rūpa, vedanā and the rest. Then we focus on that harm with every inhalation and exhalation until the contentment arises that we are going to separate with the condition that can be expressed as "to get divorced from that thing." Nurture that contentment with every inhalation and exhalation until one absolutely offers one faith with the power of wisdom and the strength of samādhi together. Separate from that thing truly, that is one is no longer satisfied with sensual things as being lovely or desireable, and one doesn't cling to states of being this or that, as being self or belonging to self, like this or that. One practices like this with every

inhalation and exhalation until the end. When one has alot of time, one distinguishes these in detail and in various categories until one is skillful and expert. And then on one occasion one will experience that one is able to cause this fading away fully as to its meaning. One sobers up and recovers with the intoxication with sensuality and one recovers from all the clinging and attaching to states of being most truly.  $R\bar{a}ga$  (lust), dosa (hatred), and moha (delusion) become things without any foundation due to this reason.

When we speak comprehensively in the form of anapanasati, the ancient teachers advised that we take up the breathing, which is the body group, pīti and sukha, which are the *vedanā* group, the factors of *jhāna* and the various kinds of thoughts and notions which are the cittā or mind group to be examined in order to see their impermanence until there arises the condition of fading away just the same. Through this standard, the practitioner must practice ānāpānasati starting over again and working through every step and contemplating everything that appears and manifests or that can be considered in order to see its impermanence for the sake of arising and fading away as we have discussed. Taking up the highest happiness to contemplate without having to distinguish and consider all the various kinds of happiness which would seem to be counting your p's and q's according to the academic approach. The reason that we contemplate only one *vedanā* but get broad and comprehensive results is because that which is the basis of all defilements without exception is collected in the point of the *vedanā*, namely the *sukhavedanā* or pleasant feeling that causes us to love, or the *dukkhavedanā* that causes us to hate. These two are the major problem of suffering. Solving the problem right at this point is therefore sufficient. If it seems too little for you, then you can expand on it. At most there are three. You can add the  $k\bar{a}y\bar{a}$  or body, namely the breathing, and the *cittā* or mind group, that is vittaka (thinking) or the mind itself, which is in various states or conditions. That would make three altogether.

The important factor is that we must practice with a mind that is *samādhi* through the meditation of sufficient wisdom, that is to meditate or focus on the characteristics of these things, what is called *lakkhaṇūpanijjhāna* up until the characteristic of *aniccaṁ* appears and then there is the condition of *udayabbayañāṇa* the knowledge of arising and decay, and *bhaṅgañāṇa*, the knowledge of ceasing and so on manifesting clearly. Practice until seeing the wicked harm to the degree that is called *ādhīnavañāṇa*, the knowledge of harmfulness. And then absolutely surrender one's faith to the power of wisdom, as we said above. All of this happens with every in breath and out breath through every one of the steps.

When practicing like this, one is called *virāganupassi*, one who continually contemplates fading away with every inhalation and exhalation. When practicing like this completely, that activity is called *dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* that is complete. It's the kind of *bhāvanā* or mental development which is able to combine all the 29 *dhammasamodāna*<sup>21</sup> on any higher level than before.

One more special thing that should be understood is that the word *virāga* here includes also the word *nipiddā* or disenchantment, fully within it. This is included in the portion that is called "seeing the wicked danger" until the satisfaction to divorce those things occurs. Otherwise there would be doubts concerning *nipiddāñāṇa*, which is one more important *ñāṇa*, as to where it fits in *ānāpānasati*. So please understand that in this step of *ānāpānasati*, *nibbidā* is included in the word *virāga* in the same way that in the previous step of *ānāpānasati*, *dukkhaṁ* and *anattā* are included in the word *aniccaṁ*.

This completes our consideration of the fourteenth step of *ānāpānasati*. Next we will consider the fifteenth step.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>See the chapter on lesson five for an explanation of *dhammasamodāna*.

(Chapter 20)

The sixteenth step of ānāpānasati: continually contemplating giving up. 22

The sixteenth lesson of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$ , or the fourth of the fourth and final tetrad has as its topic, "This bhikkhu naturally trains himself, 'constantly contemplating giving up, I will breathe in,' and naturally trains himself, 'constantly contemplating giving up, I will breathe out.' The things that must be considered in this step of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$  are (1) What must we do for it to be giving up? and (2) How must be act that it is called  $patinisagg\bar{a}nupass\bar{i}$ , namely one who continuously contemplates giving up? As for the things that must be given up, they refer to the three categories of the five khandhas, the six  $\bar{a}yatana$  and the twelve modes of  $pa\bar{n}iccasamuppada$ , just as in the previous steps of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$ . As for training in the three sikkha the situation is exactly the same as in step thirteen.

The phrase "giving up" or *paṭinissagga* has two characteristics. The first is giving up a thing directly. The second is the mind inclining towards Nibbāna, which is the utter quenching of all those things. The first implies giving up those things in such a manner that the one giving up remains in the same place. The latter means that those things are in the same place and the one giving them up escapes to someplace else. If we speak in *puggalādhiṭṭhana*, or in terms of persons, it's as if they were different things, but in a dhammic sense (*dhammādhiṭṭhana*) their fruits are the same. This can be compared to a person who gives up something he loves. He can either throw it away, or flee in some way from it. But the fruits will naturally be the same, that is, to be without that which was loved. The commentators spoke of these two ways to make it easier for individuals with different levels of intelligence -- those in whom the meaning given to words are different.

But there do exist meanings that are truly different, between which we can distinguish. (1) Giving up things that are clung to as belonging to self, attaniya — giving up those things through relinquishing them, that is contemplating them as not worth clinging to as being mine. (2) Giving up things clung to as being self, attā — giving up those things through inclining towards Nibbāna, namely the utter quenching of such things. Examining this matter in detail, we will see that the things clung to as belonging to self are easier to give up than the things clung to as being self. This is because the things that are clung to as belonging to self are things that merely stick to self, or are the hangers-on of self. For this reason they are able to be given up first. This point can be compared to the feelings of tua-goo, "me-go" and kong-goo, "my-go." Things which are kong-goo or belonging to me can be thrown off more easily than tua-goo,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup>Lecture 49, 17 November 1959.

<sup>23</sup>The Pali for this is Patinissagg $\grave{a}$ nupassi assasiss $\~{a}$ miti sikkhati. Patinissagg $\grave{a}$ nupassi passasiss $\~{a}$ miti sikkhati.

me/myself, which we don't know how to release or toss away. Throwing *tua-goo* off is going against one's will, like cutting one's throat and committing suicide, which we are not yet willing to do. As for the things that are *kong-goo*, or belonging to me, we have the capacity to relinquish them, whether as an obligation, or doing so willingly to trade it for something else, or even because we slip from its grasp. These are all possible. But the thing that is called *tua-goo*, me/myself, is something much more obscure when it comes to giving it up or getting free of it. This is because it's the mainstay or principle in all of our actions. Thus, being able to give up this me/myself requires a very intelligent *upāya*, much more than is required for giving up things that only belong to me. When we speak in the personal sense, we can say that when *tua-goo* wants to give itself up genuinely, it must run to another thing which is able to destroy that *tua-goo* completely and utterly. When *tua-goo* or me/myself has given up the things which belong to me, the *kong-goo*, so that only me/myself remains, it then runs towards that which is able to quench that me/myself conclusively. So there is a difference, as we mentioned above. There is the mind that gives up all things as a relinquishing or a sacrifice and the mind that sails towards Nibbāna that is the point of quenching of all things, including the mind.

Nevertheless, the difference between these two is merely legalistic. In actual practice, the way of practice and the fruits of practice are the same. The way of practice for giving up the five *khandhas*, or the *āyatana* does not mean giving up the material things, such as throwing them on the rubbish heap. Rather it refers only to giving them up through removing *upādāna*, any kind of attachment and clinging that exists towards them. This uprooting of *upādanà* must be done with clear, direct insight into *aniccaṁ*, *dukkhaṁ*, and *anattā* until it becomes the seeing of the total voidness of self, whether it is the self on the owner side, or the self on the side that is clung to as property or possession. When it is void of both sides only then can *upādāna* be removed and there is the fruit of no attachment that is the original cause of *dukkha*.

Even in the contemplation for the removing of attachment to the five *khandhas* or any of the ayatana which are clung to as self, we must practice using the same method, that is to contemplate aniccam, dukkham, and anatta just the same. Only that we evade in a manner that all of this when it is a such it is dukkha. When you don't want to suffer then incline the mind for the thorough quenching without any remainder of these things and then there won't be anything that is dukkha anymore. In other words, it's an inclining into nibbàna, or the mind flows towards *nibbàna*. But none of this means that we just wait until the body disintegrates or that we must hurry and destroy this body through committing suicide or any such thing. To kill oneself will not finish off  $up\bar{a}dan\bar{a}$  and in fact is a kind of  $up\bar{a}dan\bar{a}$  most fully. Without attachment, one wouldn't kill oneself. As for waiting until the body disintegrates, it's not a way of practice. The disintegration of the body does not mean that upādanā will be finished, because people and animals ordinarily have their *khandhas* breaking up and disintegrating every day, but it's not the destruction of *upādanā* merely through such deterioration and breaking up of the body. Therefore, neither killing oneself or waiting until the body breaks up by itself is the quenching of upàdanà that clings to self and consequently it is not an inclining or moving towards nibbàna in any way. We can only practice in a way where life still remains when we contemplate and see that if there is any attachment to self remaining, then there must be dukkha in the various forms to that degree, then incline the mind in a way where there is no self to be a basis for dukkha ever again. This is called having a mind inclining towards the thorough quenching of self, which can be called inclining towards *nibbàna*. And then to commit oneself fully to the practice that leads to seeing impermanence, dukkha-ness and not-self on the highest level, which causes us to no

longer feel genuinely that any self is left. There are just the pure *sankhāras* spinning according to their causes and conditions. The things that are called *dukkha*, such as ageing and death are within this group, namely they are certain aspects of *sankhāra* amongst all the various *sankhāras* that spin and flow according to their causes and conditions. There isn't any aspect in which there is clinging as being our "self" or belonging to us. Even the mind, which is still aware, feel and thinks or is contemplating the nature of these *sankhāras* -- this mind doesn't cling to itself as being self. It doesn't cling to itself as being mine, as being knower or seer, but instead sees only that this mind, as well as the seeing are merely *sankhāras*, just the same. And it sees that all of these *sankhāras* without exception are merely concoctions or creations. They are just natural, ordinary things that are just such. There is no way that they could be self, belong to self, be ours or theirs, be the owner or the owned, or any such similar thing.

When the mind realizes this voidness of self truly in such a way, it is equal to the quenching of oneself completely, which is what we call *nibbàna* here. Therefore *pañinissagga*, the kind of giving up which uses the *upāya* or skillful means of making the mind run towards *nibbàna* has a meaning of practice and has fruits of practice exactly the same as the kind of *pañinissagga* which uses the *upāya* of relinquishing all of those things. This is because both *upāya* have the same meaning, that is, to make voidness of self or *suññatā* appear. If one contemplates the voidness of the side that is clung to, we call it relinquishing those things. But if one contemplates the side which is the clinger, namely the mind, then it becomes making the mind realize voidness, that is *nibbàna* itself. Thus the objective is the same, that is to make both sides realize voidness equally, then *dukkha* cannot appear. And in terms of practice, both of these are the same. There is only one or the other, and when finally reaching the end, both will utterly extinguish *dukkha* and that all things without exception are void while the mind remains a self that needn't be void -- this is something impossible, because that which is called voidness is a whole or singular. If it is truly realized, it makes everything void, both the side that clings and the side that is clung to.

Therefore in terms of practice, when one practices to the end then both sides are void together at the same time. Otherwise, it's another kind of voidness, but is a voidness which isn't genuine, a mere temporary voidness, or it is merely certain levels or certain aspects of practice that aren't yet complete which give results merely of letting go of this thing or that thing. It lets go merely of things that are easy to let go of, for example, those aspects which are clung to as the belongings of self, or that belong to me, in the cruder aspects. But it doesn't affect or shake the self, or the "me myself," at all.

But when suññatā or genuine voidness manifests, just then is it truly void and there is nothing left to wait or remain as self. The self that acts, and is acted upon, such actions and the fruits of such actions, no matter whether they are considered to be kusala or akusala or abhaygrita (neither kusala nor akusala) all realize voidness together and without exception. The mode of giving up, namely pañinissagga occurs fully without requiring anyone be the giver-up or the relinquisher because it's all void anyway. Even the giving up itself or the things that are given up must still be void, that is it's the thorough quenching of selfhood. Therefore when we speak in paramata or ultimate terms or in terms of the highest truth, we say it's the very same voidness. It's the genuine giving up and there is just one, there are not two kinds or many kinds, as is spoken of in common speech, in the way that they distinguish different sides or aspects as we did earlier using bukaltisathan or the personal terminology. Whether the five

khandas, the six inner āyatana, or the modes of interdependent conditioning of these things which is called pañicca-samuppàda -- all are given up completely through this means of realizing voidness as we have explained. This examination of the five khandas as being void is a giving up of the five *khandas* within itself.<sup>24</sup> In other words, before this time we received or clung to the khandas in some aspects as being self and in other aspects as belonging to self, through the power of *upādāna*. Now the five *khandhas* have been contemplated according to the truth, that is, they are void utterly and are not the basis for attachment ever again, and so consequently attachment ceases. When attachment quenches, there is nothing left to be a means for clinging, and the five khandhas become void also. When there is no more such attachment or accepting, then it has the fruits equal to giving up even though there is no need for the one who gives up because the mind and the *upadana* have become void of self. To summarize, the cont3emplation of the five *khandhas* as being void is to relinquish or give up the five *khandhas* and so it is called paricaga-pañinissagga, the giving up through sacrifice. And the contemplation of the mind as being void of self, that is making the mind incline towards nibbàna, which is the quenching of all those khandhas including the mind itself can be called pakanatana-pañinissagga or giving up through leaping or springing. The contemplation of the five khandhas as being void is to contemplate them as being aniccam, dukkham and anatta to the utter end as we explained earlier and in detail concerning the thirteenth step of anapanasati.

Contemplating the six inner ayatana as being void has the same characteristics as with the five khandhas because the six inner ayatana are one aspect of the five khandhas, that is the khandha which performs the function of knowing the arammana or sense objects which make contact. In another respect we can say that the ayatana refer to the group among the five khandas which function in the moment of receiving the arammana through the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind. Making these six things void is to contemplate them as being sankhāra or as being merely and purely natural without any discernable self, but they merely have the characteristic of being their own natural mechanisms which are able to receive the arammana according to the nature of rupadhammas, and namadhammas, that is physical and mental natures that are collecting together and are able to do all these wonderful things to the point of the wrong assumption arising that these things are attà or self or that they have an attà or self within them. Contemplating these things until seeing them as utterly void is considered to be pakatanapañinissagga most truly. In essence this means distinguishing the aspect of the khandhas which are the mind to be contemplated in particular as being void. Contemplating the various modes of pañicca-samuppàda as being void is to contemplate such that we see this automatic mechanism of *rupadhammas* and *namadhammas*, that is the interdependent concocting of these things in an endless chain, which is merely a natural mechanism of the rupadhammas and namadhammas that are able to perform such functions automatically. Within these natures themselves, there is no need for any attà or spirit or soul or any kind of self that would be the culprit or the principal actor or essence in any of these actions or functions that are performed. It is merely the movement of pure natures which condition each other when they come into association and they act upon each other, pushing on each other as causes and fruits until the various symptoms of conditioning appear endlessly. Therefore it is just these rupadhammas (material things) and namadhammas (immaterial natures) in the moments of being causes and conditions or in the moment of being fruits (vipakka) or the various modes of

 $<sup>^{24}</sup>$  This is now lecture 49, 18 November 1959

that conditioning that gives rise to those fruits coming from their causes and then those fruits become the causes of other things, and so on endlessly. All of this are the natural modes, merely, of *rupadhammas* and *namadhammas*. There is no *att*à or self or anything associated with any of this. Every aspect is thereby void of any meaning of being self or of belonging to self in the least way. This is the condition of giving up every aspect and mode of pañicca-samuppàda both the aspects which are causes and those which are fruits and those which are merely the modes of concocting. Thus it can be said that the giving up this pañicca-samuppàda group is both paricaggpañinissagga, giving up through sacrifice as well as pakanatanapañinissagga, giving up through leaping. That is, it is a giving up both in the aspect which are the five khandhas, namely the aspects which are fruits, and the aspects which are conventionally called the mind, that is the doer of these activities which arises from not knowing the truth or of being utterly deceived. When these three are combined then we can say then it's the giving up of the world in its position of being arammana, it's the giving up of the mind in its position of the mind as being the one that experiences the arammana, that is the world, and it's the giving up of the association or the concocting or production of all these things in the world that create the world or that are caught up in the interrelationships between the world and the mind that experiences the world. When all three categories are given up then it is that there's nothing remaining to be the basis for dukkha or the basis for attachment for attachment and clinging which is the basis for all that dukkha. There is only non-suffering, cool, quenching peace, liberation, letting go and freedom. There are no more distinctions and discriminations or whatever we might say or describe. In short all of this together amounts to the end or the absolute finish of the samsaravata, the stream of dukkha and we like to call such a state the realization of *nibbàna*. All of this is to demonstrate how *pañinissagga* or giving up is connected with the word *nibbàna*.

As for the problem concerning what are we to do to receive the title *pañinissaganupassi* or one who continuously contemplates giving up -- we can explain that the one who practices ānāpānasati up to this step must change the principle of one's noting and contemplate in a new way, that is to move up to a higher level that causes the clear experience of one's own giving up. That is after seeing aniccam, dukkham and anatta there arises a satisfaction with the fading away of attachment and the quenching of all sankhāras. Then make the mind to be unperturbed regarding all sankhāras that have been contemplated as being void genuinely with every inhalation and exhalation. The best way is to go back and practice every step of anapanasati again from the first step and to successively contemplate everything that appears, beginning with the breathing, the various *nimitta* and the *jhāna* factors up until the dhammas which are the basis for clinging directly, that is *sukkhavedana* or pleasant feeling in the *jhānas*, and the mind that notes these various things all as being things which must be given up because there's nothing worth clinging to in any way. Then focus and scrutinize that all of these things are aniccam, dukkham and anatta even further until the mind is filled with weariness and disenchantment and one's passion and lust for those things fades away and then the mind is filled with the dhamma that is the quenching of those things, that is the insight that all these things have no self at all until the mind lets go or is void of clinging to those things even higher. And to proceed further until reaching the kicca or duties to be done that is to let go through samuchedavimutti (liberation through absolute cutting off) truly.

In the beginning stages it is just tadanga-vimutti or coincidental liberation: through practicing ānāpānasati, the mind lets go of those things by itself. And there are moments of vikampanavimuddhi, as when the mind is filled with jhāna and lets go through the power of that *jhāna* for the entire period of *jhāna*. We must try to do all of these are things with great care, precision and subtlety with every inhalation and exhalation. Whatever kind of practice it is noting whatever kind of arammana on whatever level -- all of it's considered to be pañinissaggānupassī. When practicing this in way, it's called developing the meditation of contemplating dhammānupassanāsatipaṭṭhāṇa-bhāvanā, dhamma application of mindfulness, which is the final stage of true meditation and it combines all the twenty-nine samudhānadhammas on the highest level of our practice and cultivation of ānāpānasati in the stage which is complete and perfect vipassanā-bhāvanā or insight meditation.

Our consideration of the sixteenth step of *ānāpānasati* is now complete.

Concerning this fourth tetrad it considered be is to dhammanupassanasatipathanabhāvanā, the contemplation of dhamma foundation of mindfulness in all respects. The first step is to contemplate aniccam, dukkham and anatta which can be summarized as being  $su\tilde{n}\tilde{n}at\bar{a}$ , the essential meaning of which is that they are void in such a way that there is nothing to cling to and if one insists on clinging one will suffer. In the next step one notes and contemplates the fading away of attachment and clinging concerning those things because it hates and fears the harm and danger, namely the dukkha that is born from clinging. In the next step, there is contemplation of the sort that sees that there isn't any real self in any of it, or in any of those things. Clinging is just an ephemeral, hot and cold phenomena because that which clings doesn't haven't any genuine self, the things that are clung to don't have any true self and so how could that clinging be any kind of self. One contemplates in a way that quenches the self of all these things completely. In the fourth and final step, one notes and contemplates in a way that can be conventionally spoken of as now we have given up and tossed away all of those things by making them truly void. All things without exception are truly void. And then the mind is in a state that we might assume to called having realized *nibbàna* -- it has dissolved within that voidness or suññatā, and there is nothing left to be self in order to cling to anything as being of self, ever more.

Practicing this group or tetrad is called contemplating Dhamma because these four aspects of Dhamma are contemplated directly. We contemplate (1) aniccatā, (2) virāga, (3) nirodhā and (4) paṭinissagga. In the way that we have discussed it, this is different from the earlier tetrads. In the first tetrad we only examined the body or the breathing. In the second tetrad, we contemplated only the various aspects of the vedanā. In the third tetrad because we contemplated the mind in various ways. But here, it's the contemplation of Dhamma, that is the natural condition which is the truth of all things that when known the mind is liberated from all dukkha. They differ as to their level in this way. The fourth tetrad of ānāpānasati is now finished.

## Combining all four tetrads

The first tetrad is purely *samatha-bhāvanā*. The second and third tetrads are *samatha-bhāvanā* mixed with *vipassanā-bhāvanā* and this fourth tetrad is *vipassanā-bhāvanā* perfected. *Samatha-bhāvanā* is to note through the *ārammana* (object) or *nimitta* (sign) for

the sake of mental stability or concentration and has as its final fruits the *jhānas. Vipassana-bhāvanā* is to note the characteristics of impermanence, suffering and unsatisfactoriness, and not-self to make the mind know clearly and experience this in all things. Its final result is the  $\tilde{n}$   $\bar{a}nas$ . So it is that the sixteen lessons or objects of  $\bar{a}n\bar{a}p\bar{a}nasati$  begin with training the mind to have the strength of  $jh\bar{a}na$  through the first tetrad, then training the strength of nana that arises mixed together with the strength of nana in the second and third tetrads.

Source: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/buddhadasa

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